

The present invention provides a game feature in which in response to a trigger condition a wild card symbol roams around the display and a prize is awarded for winning combinations created while the wild card is positioned at each location.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention consists in a gaming machine having display means, and game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game wherein a plurality of symbols are randomly selected and displayed on the display means and, if a winning combination results, the machine pays a prize, the game being characterised in that upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, a wild card symbol is displayed in a first display location and then progressively moved to each of a predetermined number of other display locations, a prize being awarded for winning combinations formed with the wild card symbol for each location in which the wild card symbol is displayed.

The present invention is applicable to video gaming machines of the traditional poker machine style (also known as slot machines or fruit machines) in which the display means comprises a video simulation of a set of rotatable reels, each carrying a plurality of symbols. The invention is equally applicable to video draw poker machines in which a poker hand is displayed on the screen, the cards of the hand being selected from a standard 52 or 53 card deck.

Preferably, the feature of the present invention will be triggered by the occurrence of a special symbol or a combination of special symbols displayed in a particular arrangement. In the preferred embodiment the feature is triggered by a first symbol, preferably an iceberg, appearing in the first (or left hand) column of the display and a second symbol preferably a symbol having a coin background appearing in the last (or right hand) column of the display.

In the preferred embodiment the wild card symbol is a penguin and this symbol is moved from one location to another via an animated walking motion. Preferably, the wild card symbol is first displayed at a location at one end of the display and is progressively moved from location to adjacent location until it has been displayed in each and every location of the display.

Brief Description of the Drawings

An embodiment of the invention will now be described, by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 illustrates a gaming machine with a video simulation of a rotating reel display incorporating a first embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 illustrates a video draw poker machine incorporating a second

the feature is heard and an animated PENGUIN symbol and sounds are to accompany the animation. At each win during the feature, normal winning tunes are to be heard as the win meter increments in the same manner as for the base game to which the feature has been added. These tunes last for the length of time that the win meter is incrementing.

The sequence of the features in this embodiment are as follows: 1. When an ICEBERG appears anywhere on Reel 1 together with a background COIN anywhere on Reel 5, the PENGUIN FEATURE begins.

2. The number of lines and the credits bet per line played before the feature starts is the same for the feature.

3. When the feature begins, feature PENGUIN SOUNDS will occur and a message centred in the display area above the symbols "PENGUIN FEATURE:" is to be displayed.

4. The animated PENGUIN symbol will appear on the screen, on top of the top left hand symbol on Reel 1.

5. The PENGUIN will move to each symbol in the window (Animation from Video Graphics). As the PENGUIN moves to each of the symbols the symbol changes to a PENGUIN then changes back to the original symbol as the PENGUIN moves on to the next symbol and pays each winning combination in which the PENGUIN substitutes. For each paying combination the PENGUIN animation will be extended (that is, a PENGUIN dancing and moving its arms as the meter increments. (See examples). The win meter increment speed for each partial feature pay will be "as if" the win meter started at zero.

Example:

ICE K J DOG WH
PO Q PO PO PO
SE J Q WH J/B

A combination of an ICEBERG displayed on the first reel, and a Jack with background coin on the last reel starts the feature.

PENGUIN K J DOG WH
PO Q PO PO PO
SE J Q WH JIB

When the feature begins the Penguin appears on the top symbol on Reel 1.

ICE K J DOG WH
PENGUIN Q PO PO PO
SE J Q WH J/B

The Penguin then moves to the second position and the top symbol changes back to the original symbol.

ICE K J DOG WH
PO Q PO PO PO
PENGUIN J Q WH JIB

The Penguin moves to the third position and the second symbol changes back to its original symbol.

ICE K J DOG SE
PO Q PO PO PO
SE PENGUIN Q SE J/B

The Penguin then moves on to the fourth position and the third symbol changes back to its original symbol and so on. The pattern followed by the PENGUIN is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 3.

6. As the PENGUIN moves from symbol to symbol, sounds of a PENGUIN WALKING will be heard.

7. At each win during the feature, a 'win' sound, as in the base game, will be heard as the win meter increments. Sounds are to last for the length of time as win meter increments.

8. When the PENGUIN reaches the last position in the window, the PENGUIN disappears and a message displaying "END OF PENGUIN FEATURE" is to be centred in the display area above the symbols.

Example: Playing 9 liners: All pays each way:

Of the 15 positions the PENGUIN walks to, this example shows just some of the winning combinations.

ICE Q J DOG WH
 SE SE SE PO PO
 K J WH WH J/B

This combination starts the feature and pays 3 of a kind SEAL, 2 of a kind POLAR and 3 of a kind scattered WEIALE.

ICE Q J DOG WH
 PENGUIN SE SE PO PO
 K I WH WH J/B

If the PENGUIN moves to the second position of the walk and pays the 3 of a kind SEAL only.

ICE Q J DOG WH
 SE PENQUIN SE PO PO
 K J WH WH J/B

When the PENGUIN reaches the second column. on the centre line it pays 3 of a kind SEAL and 2 of a kind POLAR.

ICE Q PENGUIN DOG WH
 SE SE SE PO PO
 K J WH WH J/B

1 When the PENGUIN reaches this position it will pay 3 of a kind QUEEN.

ICE Q J DOG WH
SE SE PENGUIN PO PO
K J WH WH J/B

When the PENGUIN reaches this position it will pay 3 of a kind SEAL. 2 of a kind POLAR and 3 of a kind QUEEN.

ICE Q J DOG WH
SE SE SE PENGUIN PO
K J WH WH J/B

When the PENGUIN reaches this position it will pay 4 of a kind SEAL and 2 of a kind POLAR and 3 of a kind JACK.

ICE Q J DOG WH
SE SE SE PO PENGUIN
K J WH WH J/B

When the PENGUIN reaches this position it will pay 2 of a kind POLAR.

When applied to a draw poker machine, the feature might be invoked, for example by an ACE in the first card position and a club suit in the last card position.

The special feature symbol (equivalent to the PENGUIN in the previous embodiment) would then be displayed sequentially in each card position and act as a wild card in combination with the remaining cards of the hand. A prize is awarded for each new winning combination created by the wild card.

The slot machine G0 of claim 2, is similar to that of Figure 1 in all respects except that instead of pseudo spinning reels 42 carrying symbols 43, the video display 41 displays a hand of a card game comprising, for example, 5 cards 61 of a draw poker hand.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the

invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

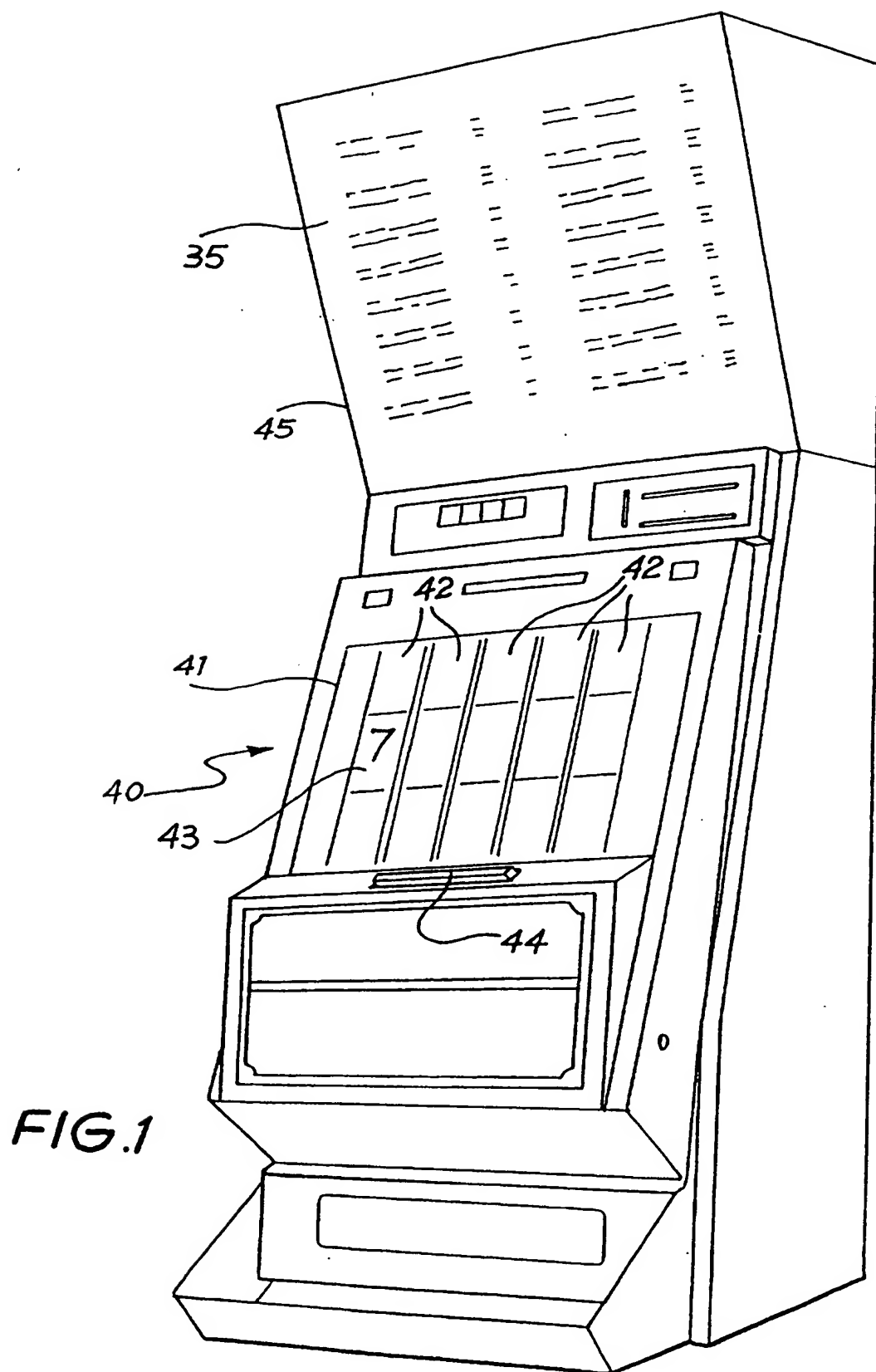
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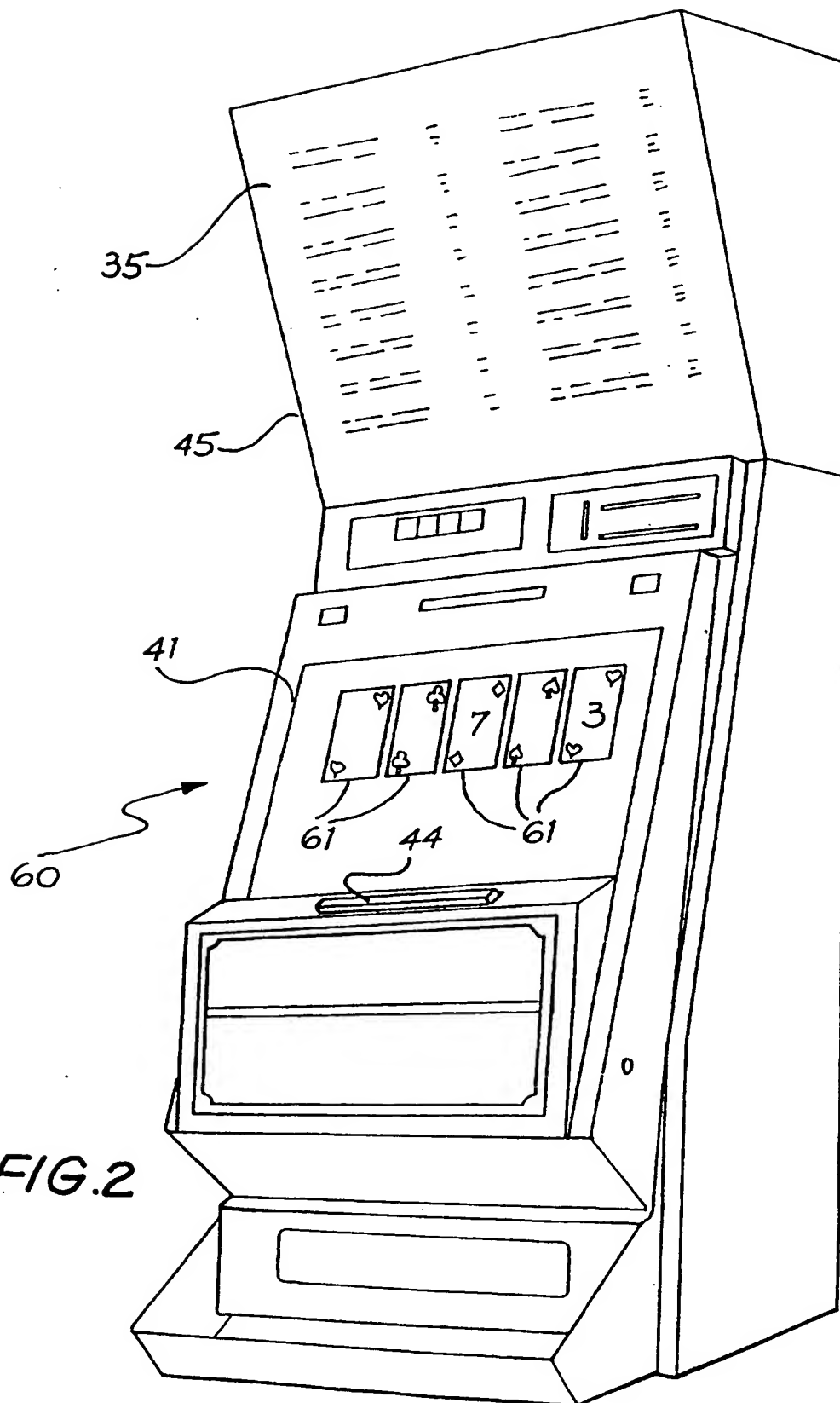
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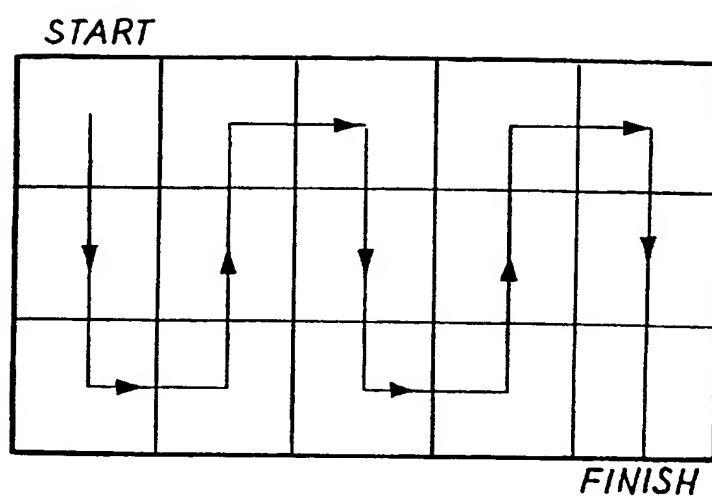
CLAIMS

1. A gaming machine having display means, and game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means. the game control means being arranged to play a game wherein a plurality of symbols are randomly selected and displayed on the display means and, if a winning combination results, the machine awards a prize, the game being characterised in that upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event. a wild card symbol is displayed in a first display location and then progressively moved to each of a predetermined number of other display locations. a prize being awarded for winning combinations formed with the wild card symbol for each location in which the wild card symbol is displayed.
2. The gaming machine of claims 1 wherein the display means comprises a video display simulating a set of rotatable reels, each carrying a plurality of symbols.
3. The gaming machine of claim 1 wherein the display means is a video display arranged to display the cards of the hand being selected from a standard 52 or 53 card deck.
4. The gaming machine as claimed in any one of claims 1-3 wherein the triggering event is the occurrence of a special symbol or a combination of special symbols displayed in a particular arrangement.
5. The gaming machine of claim 4 wherein the triggering event is the occurrence of a first symbol, appearing in the first (or left hand) column of the display and a second symbol appearing in the last (or right hand) column of the display.
6. The gaming machine of claim 5 wherein the first symbol is an iceberg and the second symbol is a symbol having a coin background.
7. The gaming machine as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the wild card symbol is a penguin and this symbol is moved from one location to another via an animated walking motion.
8. The gaming machine as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the wild card symbol is first displayed at a location at one end of the display and is progressively moved from location to adjacent location until it has been displayed in each and every location of the display.

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*FIG. 3*